

# COMMUNITIES

**DISASTERS » THIS TIME, IT'S A DRILL**



WENDY SHEPHERD

Community Emergency Response Team members prepare to load cases of water into resident's vehicle.

# KG prepares for life after hurricane hits

BY REBECCA J. BARNABI  
THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Fortunately, this was a drill. Only a drill.

The state government was contacted on Friday about a Category 4 hurricane in King George County.

Emergency personnel reported how many residents were hurt, how many were without shelter and what supplies were needed.

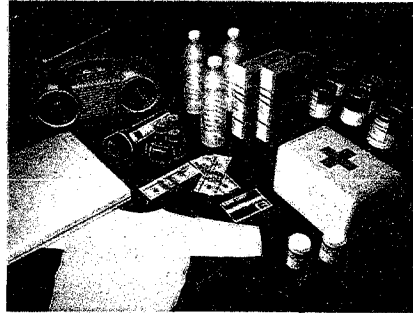
The state responded and a steady stream of King George residents came to King George High School on Saturday morning for water and supplies.

But the sky was clear and blue. "We're practicing our plan for a distribution site for food and water," said Wendy Shepherd, King George County emergency management coordinator. "So, basically, we're making sure we have everything we need to serve the public in an efficient manner."

Volunteers along the entrance to the high school directed residents to six stations where they received cases of Nestlé water.

Shepherd said that in the event of an emergency, one case per person in a household per day would be given from the distribution site. Ideally, families are given three days' worth of supplies.

The exercise began on Friday when emergency personnel in King George called the state government to report that a Category 4 hurricane had struck King George and



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they were in need of assistance.

Volunteers arrived at 6 a.m. on Saturday to practice for three hours before the exercise was to begin.

By 8:45 a.m. so many residents had lined up for the supplies that the volunteers began giving them out early.

For the next two hours, almost 30 members of the King George Community Emergency Response Team directed residents and placed cases of water into their car trunks, back seats or in pickup trucks.

The water was donated by Nestlé through Wal-Mart.

According to Linda Taylor, customer business manager for Nestlé Co. in Charlotte, N.C., nearly 800 cases of water were passed out within the first two hours of the exercise.

In the event of a real emergency, such as a hurricane, tornado or severe winter storm, residents who are signed up for KGAlert would receive text messages on their cell

phones alerting them of the situation.

"Citizens should be prepared with food and water for themselves and their pets for at least three days," said Shepherd. "[During an emergency situation,] it could take us three days to get to them with supplies."

Such a situation happened after Hurricane Isabel in September 2003, said Shepherd. It took emergency personnel two days to get to the Matthias Point area of King George because trees were blocking roadways.

A distribution site at the King George firehouse on State Route 3 passed out water and supplies to residents.

The exercise in King George was the end of a broader weeklong event in cooperation with state and federal governments. Shepherd said that 675 cars came through the point of distribution in less than three hours.

In addition to cases of water donated by Nestlé, the Federal Emergency Management Agency donated tarps and meals ready-to-eat.

A practice distribution event also took place in Fredericksburg Saturday.

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